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## Senate

The Senate met at 10:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable MARK L. PRYOR, a Senator from the State of Arkansas.

### PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Almighty God, before whom the generations rise and pass away, give our Senators today the provisions of Your grace. Provide them with the grace of Your comfort to cheer, Your wisdom to teach, Your hand to guide, Your counsel to instruct, and Your presence to inspire. Prosper the works of their hands, as You direct their steps. Lord, show them what needs to be changed and give them the courage and wisdom to do. In all their labors, help them to strive to fulfill Your purposes for our Nation and world.

We pray in Your great Name. Amen.

### PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable MARK L. PRYOR led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America and to the Republic for which it stands, one Nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

### APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. BYRD).

The legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,  
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,  
Washington, DC, January 8, 2009.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable MARK L. PRYOR, a

Senator from the State of Arkansas, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ROBERT C. BYRD,  
President pro tempore.

Mr. PRYOR thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

### RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

### SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, following leader remarks, there will be a period of morning business with Senators allowed to speak for up to 10 minutes each. All Senators are invited to gather in the Senate Chamber at 12:45 p.m. to proceed to the Hall of the House for the counting of electoral ballots. The joint session will commence at 1 p.m. The Senate will recess from 3:30 until 4:45 to allow for a special Democratic caucus meeting. If none have been to the counting of the electoral ballots, it is quite historic and interesting, and people should consider going to that.

### MEASURE PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—S. 22

Mr. REID. It is my belief that S. 22 is at the desk and due for its second reading.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will read the bill for the second time.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 22) to designate certain land as components of the National Wilderness Preservation System, to authorize certain programs and activities in the Department of the Interior and the Department of Agriculture, and for other purposes.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I object to any further proceedings with regard to this legislation.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Objection is heard. The bill will be placed on the calendar.

Mr. REID. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

### SUPPORT FOR ISRAEL IN ITS BATTLE WITH HAMAS AND THE ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN PEACE PROCESS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I rise to voice my strong support for a resolution in support of Israel that Senator MCCONNELL and I introduced with a bipartisan, overwhelming number of Senators. When we pass this resolution, the U.S. Senate will strengthen its historic bond with the State of Israel, by reaffirming Israel's inalienable right to defend against attacks from Gaza as well as our support for the Israeli-Palestinian peace process.

I spoke last week with Prime Minister Olmert and again expressed my understanding of and appreciation for the terrible situation that Israel has faced. Hamas has been firing rockets and mortars into Israel, killing, maiming innocent Israeli citizens for more than 8 years. I ask any of my colleagues to imagine that happening here in the United States, rockets and mortars coming from Toronto and Canada into Buffalo, NY. How would we as a country react? We would react, and we would react swiftly and quickly. Israel has been very patient.

Gaza was controlled by Israel since 1967. They, in an effort of extending an olive branch to the Palestinians, gave that territory up willingly. What have they gotten in return for it? Mortars and rockets fired, by now into the thousands. So we would have to react

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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